

At The Richmond Theatres This Week

ACADEMY OF MUSIC,
"St. Elmo" all the week.
LUBIN THEATRE.
Continuous Vaudeville.

First Production of "St. Elmo."

Ever since the first announcement several weeks ago that the Page Players would present a dramatization of "St. Elmo" as one of the season's offerings there has been much speculation among the curious as to play and authorship. That the play is to receive its first production on any stage at the Academy of Music to-morrow night has sufficiently excited local theatrical interest to such an extent that it is now a foregone conclusion that "St. Elmo" will be received by the largest audiences of the stock season.

No author of fiction has been more beloved than Mrs. Augusta Evans Wilson, a Southern woman, whose delightful stories have been read throughout the world by countless thousands. "St. Elmo," written in 1866, has always been Mrs. Wilson's most favored work. Its story deals with a period around 1850, and its scenes being laid around Chattanooga, under the shadow of Lookout Mountain and along the picturesque banks of the Tennessee, give the novel a peculiarly interesting atmosphere. All this must have appealed to Willard Holcomb, a well known critic and dramatist, who saw in Mrs. Wilson's delightful tale of the Southland many possibilities for a play of heart-gripping interest. It was only a short time before Mrs. Wilson's death that Mr. Holcomb secured the approval of his dramatization and her consent to its production on the stage, for she had up to that time resisted all approaches on the part of dramatists to make over any of her works for stage uses.

This permission having finally been obtained and the work in hand completed, arrangements were at once made with Messrs. Page and Benjamin to give the play its first production in Richmond, where Mrs. Wilson spent many months during the war, and where her novel of "Macaria" was written and published. It is therefore a peculiar coincidence that the first play adapted from any of her novels should first be presented in this city. Mr. Holcomb has had a hard task to reduce a book of nearly 600 pages into an acting version of four acts and yet retain most of the intensely interesting incidents, but those who have watched the rehearsal the past week say he has succeeded admirably, and has given the stage a play of many emotions and much heart interest, appealing in its pathos and enlivened by many intensely dramatic scenes.

For the benefit of those who have not read "St. Elmo" lately (everybody seems to have read this novel some time during the forty years it has been one of the "six best sellers"), it may be stated that Mrs. Wilson wrote a very powerful story of the old South, with the evident purpose of discrediting the practice of duelling, which then prevailed. And while the once-



MISS LOUISE REED,
a new member of the Page Players.

accepted "code of honor" has since passed into the limbo of customs almost forgotten, except by a few young hot-heads, the dramatic intensity of her theme remains, and any painful associations it might have awakened are also dead.

According to the plot, as preserved in Mr. Holcomb's stage version of the story, Edna Earl, granddaughter of a poor, but worthy old blacksmith of Chattanooga, is the unexpected witness of a duel, wherein St. Elmo Murray, a young aristocrat of Georgia, kills Murray Hammond, his boyhood chum

and son of his tutor, Rev. John Hammond. Therefore when, in after years, accident and ambition combine to make Miss Earl the protegee of St. Elmo's mother, and the pet pupil of the Rev. Mr. Hammond, she regards the young aristocrat with fear and aversion, based upon her belief that he is a murderer whose wealth and social position have enabled him to escape just punishment.

For three acts thereafter it is a duel between St. Elmo and Edna—aristocrat and ambitious plebeian; the old South versus the new—a contest complicated by their mutual love, which grows stronger with the ensuing complications, until it eventually overrides pride, difference in "rank" and wealth, and is brought to a happy conclusion on a basis of mutual respect

and spiritual love. In this respect the play, while plentifully supplied with spontaneous comedy, quite "in the pleasure and the period," is said to rise to heights of dramatic intensity not surpassed by any drama since the days of "The Christian" and "The Sign of the Cross."

In condensing the story into four acts of ordinary length and "time and place," extending over fifteen years and two continents, to the limits of the regular stage performance, Mr. Holcomb has done something out of the ordinary, and his play deserves a respectful hearing, even if it should not prove perfect on the first performance. However, no means have been neglected to make it complete within the limited time for study and preparation, and the Page Players deserve credit in advance for their hard and earnest work to this end.

Following is the cast:
St. Elmo Murray, Frank Sylvester.
Rev. John Hammond, James A. Ellis.
Murray Hammond, his son, J. C. Cliney Mathews.
Gordon Leigh, Robert Cain.
Mr. Dent and Mr. Clinton, seconds in the duel, Charles Hemstreet and Herbert Curtis.
Aaron Hunt, the blacksmith, Alfred Hudson.
Shadrach, house servant at the Murrays, J. Cliney Mathews.
Sheriff, James Abram.
Edna Earl, the blacksmith's granddaughter, Carroll McComas.
Mrs. Ellen Murray, mother of St. Elmo, Maye Louise Algen.
Agnes Powell, his "cousin," Virginia Ward.
Mrs. Wood, neighbor of Aaron Hunt, Louise Reed.
Tabitha, her daughter, Ethel Hewitt.

Week at the Lubin.

The warm weather of the past week did not detract from the drawing power of the excellent attractions offered at the Lubin, where the best features in vaudeville and pictures are offered each week. Commencing with the matinee Monday afternoon the Lubin will present a bill that should prove of interest to all seekers after refined amusement. Heading the list will be the Hanson-Bonet Comedy Company, offering a sketch, constructed for laughing purposes only, and judging from the many notices the offering has more than fulfilled its mission everywhere. Originality and novelty abound in the number, and it is said to be entirely different from the usual run of comedy numbers.

Professor Struck, heralded as one of the most mystifying magicians, will offer a number abounding in clever feats of legerdemain, in which he will demonstrate the ability of the hand to deceive the eye.

Carl Verdo, a musical monarch with a surprising array of novelties in a musical line, will offer a number that has made one of the hits in many vaudeville houses.

There will be several new films of the best and most interesting of life-motion pictures, selected with a view to their instructive qualifications as well as their entertaining capability. Performances at the Lubin are now continuous from 3 to 6:30 and from 7:30 to 10:45.

horse in the distance, a wild rush, dislodged it was along in the spring of that season that even while being joggled about to control, was the result, so the midgate was unseated. Pending the use of the knife he was probably bred to an occasional mare, but I have no information regarding any foal from his line.

His rare beauty and airy way of going impressed me so strongly that my description interested a prominent New York amateur reinsman, who would have added him to his stable for use on the Harlem River speedway, but Merrifield candidly stated the limitations likely to unfit any trotter for use as a fun horse. It was soon after this that Little Tobe was sold at auction, though during previous years ten times the amount obtained would doubtless have been refused. Along in 1892 Fanny dropped a bay colt, gelded later and known as Corporal Trim. The Corporal, while a full brother to Little Tobe and about the same size, too, lacked the matchless beauty of form, style and speed of his near relative, and after being handled a short while dropped out of sight.

Little Tobe, though very small, was of exquisite quality and finish, with a head and neck cameo-like in proportion to contour, which with much less style, speed and high action, have made him famous as one of the world's greatest trotting show horses. His turf career began at three years old in the hands of the Baltimore trainer, his owner, who gave him a record of 2:29 1-4 that season. During the following season of 1894 Merrifield had him out again and won a record of 2:29 1-4 that season. His mark remains, yet he was able to trot halves handily over the half-mile tracks in 1:48 and was a contender in some fast heats, but still he remained eligible to the 2:20 class, high Merrifield campaigned him and won heats until the close of 1899.

With age, however, he grew sour and became difficult to control in harness, so amputation was resorted to, after which, while seemingly possessing plenty of speed and being tractable enough, the midgate trotter was no longer a profitable racing tool and his sale to Baltimore parties, for road use, followed. O. Hammond, who was the best known horsemen in the Monumental City, owned Little Tobe for a season or so, after which the little gelding, whose wonderful beauty of form and speed attracted many, passed through an auction sale and fell to a bid of \$800 from E. P. Diggs, another Baltimore road driver. It is recorded, however, that he took hold of the bit too strong for Mr. Diggs's power as a roadster, and later the son of Pamlico passed to Samuel B. Nelson, then of the America Horse Exchange, New York, who had Little Tobe docked and taught him to show high, when this filiputan trotter developed amazing form, which attracted the attention of Vivian Gooch, the English dealer, who entered into negotiations that resulted in the transfer of Little Tobe to Walter Winans, in whose stable the little gelding has won lasting fame as a show horse.

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News of Horses and Horsemen

BY W. J. CARTER ("BROAD ROCK").

Little Tobe, 2:18 1-4, the North Carolina bred trotter, formerly a familiar figure on the tracks of the East, and now, as for some years past, one of the great show horses of the world, figured among the prime attractions at the recent International Horse Show at London, where he won the pace and action class over a field of select entries. Wallace's "Book," the official source of information, gives the paternity of this now famous son of Pamlico, 1:55, also his breeder, W. P. Batchelor, of Raleigh, N. C., but his dam appears as untraced, and the year is not given that the wonderful midgate was foaled. I have it, however, from H. B. Hunter, Jr., of Warrenton, N. C., that Little Tobe's dam was Fanny, by Mazepa, an Indian pony stallion, second dam Folly, by a banker pony from the East Carolina coast, and third dam Old Sally, a time mare, always spoken of as thoroughbred. Fanny was a very hard some pony, while Folly her dam, was a small mare of exquisite quality and finish that could run fast and show speed at the trot as well. Bred and owned in the Hunter family, Folly was sometimes driven in harness, but being possessed of wonderful endurance her special fort was cross-country work and ridden to bounds by hunter in the county seemed able to outdo the little mare, who could take up weight and live through the stiffest run required to land some sly old red fox.

Production of This North Carolina Trotter Due to Chance.
The production of Little Tobe was really due to chance, as after Pamlico's stud season of 1889 had been finished, Mr. Batchelor having determined to send the son of Meander to the late James H. Holdsmith for training, Fanny, the dam of Little Tobe, was hitched to cart and about to be driven into town with Pamlico led behind for shipment, when she appeared in season and was taken out and bred to the bay stallion. This resulted in not only a trotter of class, but who was destined to become one of the famous show horses of the world.

Pamlico did well in Goldsmith's hands; in fact the small son of Meander

furnished evidence of brilliant capacity, but the death of his trainer caused the sale of the little stallion to North Carolina. Pamlico was kept in the stud at Raleigh during the seasons of 1891 and 1892, but later was shipped to E. D. Spurr, an interest in him, en route for his future home the Blue Grass, Palestine, was laid off at Richmond, and looking over him here I recall with pleasure how favorably he impressed me even on hurried inspection.

The glorious career of Pamlico and his sterling worth as a race-horse in the hands of Richard Curtis during the racing circuit comprising of 1893 and 1894 forms an interesting part of turf history, though tinged with a shadow of gloom brought by the death of Curtis by passing of the stout-hearted Little son of Meander during the grand circuit meeting of 1894, at Hartford.

There were five starters, and the event proved a contest of six heats before the money was awarded. The modest purse, I was in the stand on the occasion, and while the Year Book contains a record of the meeting, doubtless due to an oversight, my note book shows that the starters were Perrette, chestnut filly, by Juror, 2:18 1-4, owned by Samuel B. Nelson, Falls Mills, Va.; Glandon, bay colt, by C. F. Clay, 2:18, owned by Langhorne Putney, Richmond; Little Tobe, bay colt, by Pamlico, owned by Alfred Merrifield, Baltimore, Md.; Iron Bay, gray colt, by Temple Bar, 2:17 3-4, owned by Lindsay, Richmond; and Samuel B. Nelson's bay filly Nelly D., by Toodles, Jr.

Thomas Settle, who marked Catherine, Lexington, Va., and Skelton, 2:17 1-4, and other members of the famous Mamie family, drove Perrette, Colman, Hattie, and Benjamin. Little Tobe had Merrifield behind him; Joseph Staton was Nelly D.'s pilot, and Iron Bay was driven by John W. Sale, the brother of Mrs. Lindsay, who was brother of whom the late Dr. M. S. Sale, owned Temple Bar, the famous outway, by Egbert.

The time of the fastest heat of the race was only 2:33 1-4, far from sensational, as we view records now, yet a buyer had not been made, and the year-olds then, over a slow half-mile track, but at that more interest to the event than otherwise, for the reason that each of the contestants did well in after years. Perrette won the first heat in 2:33 1-4, Little Tobe took the second, the same time, and Glandon, the third, in 2:34 1-4. In after years Nelly D. earned a record of 2:18 1-4; Little Tobe one of 2:19 1-4; Glandon scored 2:24 1-4; Perrette won a heat in 2:31 1-4, and is now a brood mare at Walton Farm, while Iron Bay is created with a record of 2:11, graduating in grand circuit company, and becoming prominent as the clothes-line trotter. John Sale marked the handsome little gelding, himself, on the stretch and twisting the body would make frequent breaks. This being so, it is to be wondered at Tobe's ability to show such phenomenal speed on the rough grass show ring tracks, six laps to the mile, in England, where the Tobe's turf career lasted through six seasons, and he trotted his record at four years old, when getting, and though a roader, he would have been on the road, if he sighted another



WILLARD HOLCOMB,
the dramatizer of "St. Elmo," who will be produced for the first time on any stage at the Academy to-morrow night.

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